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## '99 grad receives prestigious Mellon Fellowship

Furman University

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# Goldwater Scholars have research on their minds

If three is a charm, then Furman is on a roll.

Following in the wake of three Truman scholars, seniors Luke Chuang, Erik Madsen and Drew Watkins have been awarded prestigious Barry M. Goldwater Scholarships for the 2001-2002 academic year. The trio will receive up to \$7,500 each to cover the remaining costs of tuition, room and board, fees and books in their undergraduate career.

A total of 302 Goldwater scholars were chosen this year from a field of 1,164 applicants.

Congress established the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarships in 1986 to honor the former Arizona senator, who served his country as a soldier and statesman for 56 years. The scholarship encourages students to pursue careers in the fields of engineering, the natural sciences or mathematics. In the past 13 years the program has awarded more than 3,300 scholarships.

Chuang, a senior mathematics and computer science major from Metairie, La., plans to earn a Ph.D. in mathematics and teach on the college level. He says he has been interested in mathematics from an early age, and he views math more as an art than a science.

According to Chuang, mathematics can be reduced to an axiomatic system, in which one can build connections between two seemingly unrelated fields. He also likens mathematics to a poem: just as words must conform to one another within a proper rhythm, so, too, must mathematical axioms agree with one another within an imposed structure, with the end result being one of artistic beauty.

This summer, Chuang received a Furman Advantage research grant to study probability theory and real analysis. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and of Phi Eta Sigma, the national scholastic honor



**Luke Chuang**



**Erik Madsen**



**Drew Watkins**

society for college freshmen. He is also a member of Pi Mu Epsilon (mathematics honorary society) and Upsilon Pi Epsilon (computer science honorary society) and serves as a tutor in the Learning Resource Center.

Erik Madsen, a senior chemistry major from Charlotte, N.C., plans to pursue an M.D./Ph.D. program in biochemistry. As a Beckman Scholar, Madsen has researched small molecule anti-cancer drugs with chemistry professor Moses Lee since his sophomore year. He plans to pursue similar studies in graduate school, he says, but with more emphasis on biological factors.

Madsen says that his interest in biochemistry resulted from a frustration with cancer and its effects on so many people. While cancer research is a hot field crowded with many researchers, he says he wants to be a part of finding the cure. His work has already taken him to University College of London, where he conducted anti-cancer drug research with one of Lee's colleagues.

Outside of the lab, Madsen plays the trumpet and is a member of the Furman Symphonic Band. He is proficient in French, having spent time abroad, and is

a member of Phi Beta Kappa and the American Chemical Society.

Drew Watkins, a senior biology major from Raleigh, N.C., plans to attend graduate school to earn a Ph.D. in neurobiology. While in high school, Watkins' work with children suffering from spinal cord injuries and neurodegenerative diseases prompted his interest in the field. For the last year, Watkins has received funding from the National Institutes of Health to research thrombin-induced motor neuron apoptosis in avian birds. He plans to present his paper on the subject in November at the national convention of the Society for Neuroscience in San Diego.

At Furman, Watkins is president of the Beta Chi biology club and active with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and the admissions office. He is a recipient of the biology department's Fisher Award for academic achievement.

— Danielle Logan

*The writer, a senior history major, served as co-editor of The Paladin for the last two years.*

## '99 grad receives prestigious Mellon Fellowship

Christopher Palmer '99 has been named one of 92 winners nationwide of an Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship in Humanistic Studies for 2001.

The fellowship, a competitive award for first-year doctoral students, is designed to help exceptionally promising students prepare for careers in teaching and scholarship in humanistic disciplines. It provides tuition and fees for the first year of study in a Ph.D. program at any U.S. or

Canadian graduate school, plus a stipend of \$17,500.

This year's fellowship recipients were selected from 684 applicants.

Palmer, a native of Chattanooga, Tenn., majored in English at Furman and earned the Scholarship Cup, which goes to the graduating senior with the highest academic average. He begins work this fall on a Ph.D. degree in English Language and Literature at the University of Michigan,

where he has been awarded a Regents Fellowship, the school's top scholarship.

He spent the 1999-2000 school year at the University of Debrecen in Hungary as a Fulbright Fellow, teaching English literature and conversation to master's and doctoral degree candidates. While at Furman, he spent the first term of his senior year in Budapest through the Budapest Semesters program sponsored by St. Olaf College.